



**RESPONSE TO THE VISITING
COMMITTEE'S REPORT:
MARCH 14 – 16, 2005**

- **STANDARD 3.7.1 -- FACULTY QUALIFICATIONS**
- **STANDARD 3.3.1 – INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS**
- **CORE REQUIREMENT 12 – REVISED QUALITY**

ENHANCEMENT PLAN

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- **STANDARD 3.7.1 -- FACULTY QUALIFICATIONS**

Southeastern Louisiana University is committed to employing highly qualified faculty consistent with SACS accreditation standards. In its Reaffirmation Report of April 2005, the Visiting Committee identified a number of faculty who were judged not in compliance with the necessary qualifications based on evidence provided.

The University completely embraces the Visiting Committee's interpretation of Standard 3.7.1 and has taken aggressive action to resolve every faculty qualification issue raised by the Committee. Also, the University has redesigned its faculty hiring and credentials documentation policies and processes to ensure ongoing compliance with Standard 3.7.1 in a manner consistent with the Visiting Committee's interpretation.



**SOUTHEASTERN LOUISIANA UNIVERSITY'S RESPONSE
TO THE VISITING COMMITTEE'S REPORT:
STANDARD 3.7.1 -- FACULTY QUALIFICATIONS**

The University's Background Concerning Faculty Qualifications

Southeastern has been continuously accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools since 1946 and has always been committed to the rigorous standards of quality embodied in the SACS Principles of Accreditation, particularly as they relate to ensuring quality academic programs and quality teaching faculty. As stated in the Statement of Integrity and Commitment that was part of the 2004 Compliance Certification Report:

“... Southeastern is fully committed to the principles of integrity and its commitment to quality enhancement. Information presented to the Commission on Colleges by the University is honest, open, and accurate. The University demonstrates that integrity govern its operation at all levels. The Compliance Certification Report, endorsed by the President and the Accreditation Liaison Officer, makes evident the University's adherence to the accreditation requirements of the Commission on Colleges. The University also engages in an ongoing program of improvement and strives to make quality and effectiveness a hallmark of all programs and services that support its mission to students and the community.”

Southeastern's most recent previous accreditation site visit in 1994 resulted in no findings. The Reaffirmation Committee reviewing faculty credentials stated in their report that “The faculty members at Southeastern Louisiana University are well-prepared, competent, committed, and productive.... Southeastern Louisiana University has an orderly and clearly defined process for recruiting and appointing its faculty.”

Although the University has grown since 1994 (from an enrollment of 13,912 and 583 total faculty to 15,472 students and 759 total faculty in 2004), hiring processes and the documentation of qualifications had not significantly changed. The primary consideration has always been given to the highest degree held and additional considerations given to professional expertise, experience, and certifications when warranted. The guiding principle has always been to find the best qualified instructor for every student in every class.

The Visiting Committee's Recommendations

The recommendations of the Visiting Committee regarding Standard 3.7.1 included two statements, reiterating the degree requirements as stated in the Standard:

Recommendation 8:

The On-Site Committee recommends that the institution employ competent faculty members qualified to accomplish the mission and goals of the institution. Faculty teaching

baccalaureate courses should have a doctorate or master's degree in the teaching discipline or master's degree with a concentration in the teaching discipline (minimum of 18 graduate semester hours in the teaching disciplines).

Recommendation 9:

The On-Site Committee recommends that faculty teaching graduate and post-baccalaureate course work have the earned doctorate/terminal degree in the teaching discipline or a related discipline.

The University's Response

Southeastern did not anticipate the Visiting Committee's findings regarding faculty qualifications. However, Southeastern Louisiana University completely recognizes the professional obligations of the Visiting Committee to thoroughly review and report on faculty qualifications and to use their considerable professional judgments to determine conclusions and to make recommendations. In retrospect, the University acknowledges that it was not as thorough as it should have been in ensuring documentation of faculty qualifications was in order and readily accessible by the Visiting Committee. Furthermore, as is within their discretion, the Visiting Committee applied a fairly literal interpretation of Standard 3.7.1 in their review of faculty credentials.

The University is completely committed to quality improvement through the accreditation process, fully embraces the Visiting Committee's recommendations, and has taken an aggressive two-point approach to addressing them:

- 1) Each of the faculty identified on the Visiting Committee's faculty worksheet for non-compliance has been thoroughly reviewed in regard to teaching assignments and degrees held. The following chart indicates the disposition of the 42 faculty:

1	Retired
31	Terminated and will not be re-employed unless the appropriate degree credential stipulated by the Visiting Committee is presented
1	Completed the PhD and is now eligible to teach in the discipline
4	Completed additional graduate credit hours and now have a minimum of 18 graduate credit hours in the teaching discipline as well as a Master's degree, consistent with the finding of the Visiting Committee. Teaching is restricted to undergraduate classes, consistent with the finding of the Visiting Committee.
5	Teaching assignments are restricted to areas/levels of expertise that are appropriate for the degree credentials, as stipulated by the Visiting Committee.

Appendix A of this report shows the exact disposition of each of the 42 faculty.

It is important to note that every faculty credential issue raised by the Visiting Committee has been addressed in a manner consistent with the Visiting Committee's specifications. In other words, there are no faculty remaining in contravention to the findings of the Visiting Committee.

- 2) Southeastern has completely redesigned its hiring processes, policies and forms to be consistent with the strictest and most literal interpretation of the faculty credential standards possible.

Appendix B presents the communications from the Provost to all department heads and Deans regarding the new hiring procedures and forms. Note that the communication is very clear regarding degree discipline expectations and that “exceptions” to explicit degree qualifications should be extremely rare. Appendix C is the new recommendation of employment form which is used to employ full-time faculty in tenure track positions and full-time non-tenured continuing instructors. Appendix D is the new recommendation of employment form which is used to employ full-time or part-time faculty in temporary positions.

Appendix E is the new SACS Faculty Credentials Form; this form did not exist previously but is now required to document qualifications to teach when the degree discipline of the prospective faculty member is not an exact “match” to the teaching discipline. The documentation must be specific, detailed and accompanied by independent documentation and verification.

For all faculty hires, the entire documentation package including transcripts is circulated for approval and signature. The hire must be reviewed and approved by the department head, Dean, and the Provost.

In conclusion, Southeastern remains committed to the highest standards of faculty quality. Southeastern will stringently adhere to SACS standards in regard to faculty qualifications and will do everything possible to comply completely with the relevant guidelines and the recommendations of the Visiting Committee.

APPENDIX A

**DISPOSITION OF THE 42 FACULTY CITED BY THE VISITING
COMMITTEE
IN REGARD TO FACULTY CREDENTIALS**

APPENDIX B

**COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PROVOST TO ALL DEPARTMENT
HEADS AND DEANS REGARDING THE NEW HIRING PROCEDURES
AND FORMS**

APPENDIX C

**NEW RECOMMENDATION OF EMPLOYMENT FORM USED TO
EMPLOY FULL-TIME FACULTY IN TENURE TRACK POSITIONS AND
FULL-TIME NON-TENURED INSTRUCTORS IN BUDGETED
FACULTY POSITIONS**

APPENDIX D

**NEW RECOMMENDATION OF EMPLOYMENT FORM USED TO
EMPLOY FULL-TIME OR PART-TIME FACULTY IN TEMPORARY
POSITIONS**

APPENDIX E

NEW SACS FACULTY CREDENTIALS FORM



**RESPONSE TO THE VISITING
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- **STANDARD 3.3.1 – INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS**



**SOUTHEASTERN LOUISIANA UNIVERSITY'S RESPONSE
TO THE VISITING COMMITTEE'S REPORT:
STANDARD 3.3.1 -- INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS**

Southeastern Louisiana University did not have any recommendations in regard to Institutional Effectiveness. The University was judged to be in full compliance with Standard 3.3.1. The Visiting Committee did make several helpful suggestions for the improvement of Southeastern's Institutional Effectiveness program, including developing additional key performance indicators and more systematic assessment formats for some program assessments.

The University is committed to high standards for measuring institutional effectiveness, particularly in regard to academic programs. The University's Committee for Institutional Effectiveness has begun the process of reviewing the Visiting Committee's suggestions and determining how they can be incorporated into the University's policies and procedures as outlined in Guidelines for Institutional Effectiveness.